

VOLUME 1



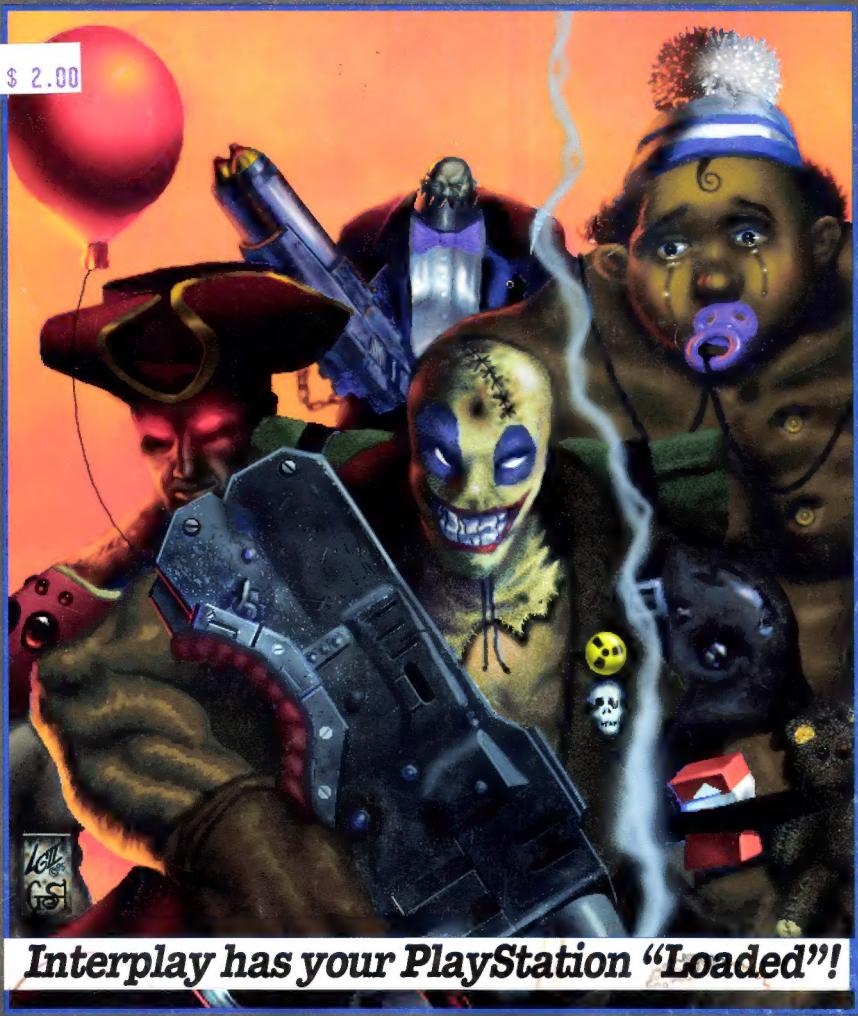
PS:X

ISSUE 2

Dime

THE PLAYER'S MONTHLY GUIDE TO SONY'S PLAYSTATION

\$ 2.00



Interplay has your PlayStation "Loaded"!

IN THIS ISSUE:

DECEMBER, 1995

X-RATED: Ten games reviewed, including: *NFL GameDay*, *Tekken*, *Warhawk*, *Twisted Metal* and more.

X-CLUSIVE: Williams Entertainment and id Software's classic, *Doom*, arrives on the PlayStation.

X-PECTING: Previews of *King's Field*, *Madden '96*, *Gex*, *Primal Rage*, *Darkstalkers* and more.

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Prepare yourself for an epic action adventure never before possible. Only now, with the gaming power made available by the Sony PlayStation™ is a world as vast and detailed as King's Field possible. Imagine a universe completely rendered in beautiful 3D graphics – in which you can travel freely, being able to look up or down, climb stairs, travel through water, jump off ridges and fight enemies – all real time, all nonlinear. This is the new way to play. As Alexander, destined to become avatar, your task is to retrieve the Moonlight Sword which has been stolen by a cult of insidious worshippers of evil. The cult's ruthless minions can take the form of skeletons, giant octopi, stag beetles, jumbo jet-sized dragonflies, deranged soldiers and many, many others. Your fighting and magic skills will have to be finely honed to take you over mountainous terrain, through rivers and oceans, and into evil infested dungeons. Life isn't all a battle for you either. You'll need a healthy dose of wit and diplomacy to



KING'S FIELD



ASCI
ENTERTAINMENT



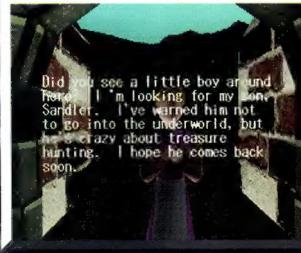
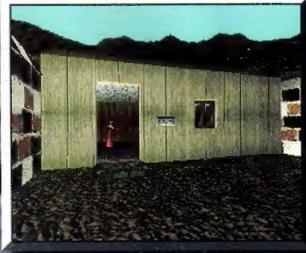
ASCIIWARE®



extract clues and information from the sometimes uncooperative inhabitants of villages that you'll encounter on your long journey. King's Field's rich storyline, complex characters, exciting action and stunning graphics are what put this game in a class all its own. RPG fan or not, you'll be hypnotized by the experience, just as

Japanese fans were. This game alone has boosted sales of the PlayStation™ in Japan. Never before has there been a game that boasts so much excitement and synergy with technology in a single package.

Just look at the awesome screen shots on these pages. There can be no hesitation - go buy yours now!



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CHOOSE

Weapon I - Specialized Joystick

- λ Turbo speed feature heightens your ability to punish.
- Ψ Auto/Turbo feature designed to maximize firepower.
- Φ Arcade control (microswitch technology) with 8 button layout.
- Ω Rugged steel control stick and base.
- Δ Slow motion feature and extra long cord.

PlayStation



ASCII
ENTERTAINMENT

TO ARENA



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YOUR WEAPONS WISELY

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- Σ Ergonomically designed controller, molded from ABS plastic.
- Ω Turbo switch with 30 shots-per-second firing power, configurable to all 8 action buttons.
- Φ Auto/Turbo delivers infinite stream of intense firepower.
- Ψ Slow motion switch and extra long cord.

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ASCIIWARE™

VOLUME 1 • ISSUE 2
DECEMBER, 1995

X-Cclusive:

Page 8

In this issue, we go inside the corridors of Williams Entertainment and id's "Doom".

X-Pecting:

Page 10

Some of the hottest titles coming to the PlayStation this year and next are featured in our previews section.

X-Treme:

Page 30

This month, we take a look at Interplay's intense arcade shooter, "Loaded". Get ready for some sweaty-palm action!

X-Rated:

Page 34

This month, we review 10 new games, including the amazing "NFL GameDay", "Viewpoint", "Twisted Metal" and "Warhawk"...a great month!

IN THIS DIMENSION



TELL US WHAT YOU REALLY THINK
ARE YOU HAVING FUN YET?

So, you've got that new PlayStation. Are you happy with the purchase? Judging by the input that we have received since the release of our first issue, you are more than happy with your next generation wonder. And, why not? In the two months that we have been publishing Dimension PS-X, we have been astounded by the sheer number of what we commonly refer to as "Gold" (or "A") titles.

Just look at this list; NFL GameDay, Agile Warrior F111-X, Destruction Derby, Warhawk, Twisted Metal, Jumping Flash, ESPN Extreme Games, Ridge Racer, Viewpoint and Tekken. And this list doesn't include near-Gold titles like Loaded, Wipeout, Battle Arena Toshinden and more! Before the end of the year, we will also be playing Defcon-5, Madden '96, Road Rash, Hi-Octane, Darkstalkers, King's Field, Doom, NHL Face Off, FIFA '96, NHL '96, NFL QB Club '96, Fade to Black and Impact Racing. Hot titles on the horizon for early '96 include Assault Rigs, Krazy Ivan, Dark Forces, Descent, baseball games from Sony Sports, Crystal Dynamics, VR Sports and Data East (via their relationship with "World Series Baseball" developer, Blue Sky), Resident Evil from Capcom and much, much more.

Which brings up a related subject, the Dimension PS-X review system. We classify games as being either "Gold" (90% and above), "Silver" (80-89%), "Bronze" (70-79%) or "Tin" (69% and below). These classifications are designed to give you a simple, accurate guide in making your purchasing decisions. Dimension PS-X is NOT about the latest and greatest game from Japan (which

only a handful of people in the US ever see), or about getting the "scoop" or "first pix!" of the "PlayStation-3". What we are about is giving the PlayStation owner and potential owner the most accurate, honest, timely and credible reviews, from game players that are considered experts in a particular type or style of game. The rating system is very simple.

We believe that Gold games are games that are must-buys for PlayStation owners, these are the titles that will appear on our holiday buyer's guide and the like.

Silver games are titles that are very strong, but that may have been missing or light in certain areas of the game's design, usually in the area of long-term play value. Silver games will appeal to, first and foremost, fans of that particular style of game, whether it be sports, role-playing, action/platform, etc.

Bronze games are typically characterized by an idea that was strong, but execution that was weak or flawed in a number of critical areas. Bronze games will appeal only to "gotta have it" die-hards for a particular style of game.

Lastly, we have Tin. Tin is not a good thing. For a game publisher, having this moniker applied to your title is something you want to avoid like the plague. It is kind of like Demi Moore walking around with that big "A" on her chest...people won't speak well of you in public. Tin games are to be avoided at all costs and have no redeeming value...other than maybe under a drink at a cocktail party.

And there you have it, the Dimension PS-X guide to better gaming! Enjoy the issue.

D. Winding

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EDITOR DAVID JON WINDING PRODUCTION DIRECTOR TIM LINDQUIST CONT. EDITOR ZACH MESTON CONT. EDITOR GLENN RUBENSTEIN
 IN-CHIEF MARIA POLIVKA@M&R

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR GREG OFF OPERATIONS MANAGER SUSAN OLSEN-WINDING

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count!

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*Exclusive to Super NES® and Genesis™



DOOM

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAMS - DEVELOPED BY ID



SPECIAL PLAYSTATION EDITION



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If you have been anywhere near a PC or video game system over the past three years, then you are no doubt aware of the unique addiction that has captivated gamers across the world and brought corporate productivity to its knees; "Doom". This trend-setting title has, quite unexpectedly, made its way to the PlayStation for 4th quarter release and it looks fantastic! According to id's John Romero, the original creator of Doom, the PlayStation version of this now classic game is the "best Doom yet". Recently, we met representatives from Williams Entertainment, Inc., the game's publishers, while they were on a press tour in southern California and obtained a beta copy of the game that you see spread before you. If you are looking for the be-all, end-all in Doom, this is the game. PlayStation Doom offers the complete Doom experience. Over 50 levels of action are available, including "Doom 2" and "Ultimate Doom", on one CD. In addition, the color palette

has been completely re-worked, from the original PC version of the game, and there are new ambient lighting effects that add even more of the dark atmosphere that has made the game such a gaming, and cultural, phenomenon. PS Doom also features frame rates up to 30 frames per second, 24 channel stereo sound effects and support for Sony's "Link Cable", allowing for two-player Deathmatch or cooperative play. The game also includes all of the original secrets, triggers, switches and areas to explore and features all of the best monsters and weapons from Doom 1 and Doom 2. Finally, the good folks at id have included what they call a "powerful, new cheat mode unique to the PlayStation edition of Doom". PlayStation Doom should be available at retail by the time you read this. If you are a "Doomer", or somehow missed out on just what all the fuss was about, you'll want to take a look at this game. We will have an editorial evaluation of PlayStation Doom in our January issue.

D. Winding



XCLUSIVE



KING'S FIELD

ASCII • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

ASCII is currently readying, for release, their first PlayStation title and the first role-playing game for the PlayStation, "King's Field". The title casts you in the role of "Alexander", King Alfred's best friend. This medieval adventure is a mystical tale about Alexander's courageous battles against the forces of good and evil. The story is centered around the castle of Verdite, on the island of Maranat. Many of the villagers believe that there is either a good god named Sieh or an evil demon known as Guyra. It is this dichotomy that is at the heart of your adventure. The game features many characters with which to interact and hundreds of weapons, items and magic. The game is played entirely through a first-person perspective and features varied and stunning texture-maps over its 360 degree, scrolling field of play. King's Field will be available at retail near the beginning of December; look for a complete review of this deep, involving quest in the January issue of Dimension PS-X.



X-PECTING

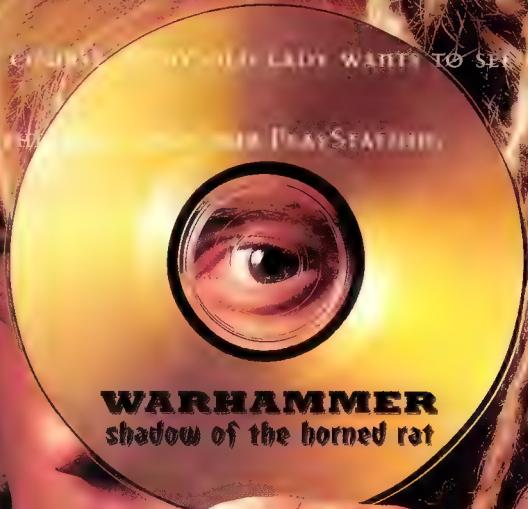
I SEE THE WORLD AS MY VERY OWN EMPIRE

FILLED WITH THE HORDES, TROOPS, ELVES AND OTHER CREATURES THAT ALL

EXIST FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF HELPING ME TO VICTORY. THE FORCES

OF CHAOS. THE HORDES. THE HORROR. LADY WARMACHINE. TO SEE YOU WITH ME,

I HAVE TO GO BACK TO MY PLACES.



WARHAMMER shadow of the horned rat

With its fast-paced battle scenarios, fully-mapped 3D graphics and the world that only comes from

leading a bunch of mutants into the heart of war, it's no surprise that people find

Warhammer: Shadow of the Horned Rat to be, shall we say, a little...odd-steering.



MINDSCAPE



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IMPACT RACING

JVC • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

JVC's "Impact Racing" is the publisher's first PlayStation product, in which the player finds himself in an all-out war and race toward the finish line. The racing action occurs over three different courses that feature hairpin curves, chasm jumps and high-speed turns. You have a number of weapons at your disposal as well, including land mines, lasers, missiles and fire walls. From the preview version of Impact Racing that we were given, it is apparent that the game is going to be very quick and, according to JVC, the texture-mapped polygon environment will be running at over 30 frames per second. Impact Racing features six different vehicles to choose from, each with different acceleration and handling attributes and different payload capacities. Each of the game's three courses features four different variations. There are also mirror, night and night-mirror modes. Impact Racing should be available near the end of the year and we look forward to reviewing the game in either our January or February issue.



XPECTING

WHEN I'M NOT BUSY EXTRACTING MOLARS

I like to jump into my space fighter or recharized warrior suit
and save the earth from an ancient alien race. When I'm finished,
I take the privacy of my PlayStation and have it to myself at work.
I can't wait until my kids grow up never to hear me say,



seamlessly rendered graphics and three CDs of gameplay. That's an impressive

you just might want to keep to yourself. (However, if you still do,

join the Raven At Work fan club, might we suggest Loverboy, Twisted Sister or Milli Vanilli.)



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MINDSCAPE

PRIMAL RAGE

TIME WARNER • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

Time Warner Interactive is about to release its mega-hit arcade game, "Primal Rage", for the PlayStation. For those of you who have not seen or played Primal Rage, it is a head-to-head fighting game that features seven fantasy, pre-historic dinosaurs in a battle for supremacy. The game features stop-motion animation, similar to that found in films such as "King Kong". In addition, nearly 100 frames of animation were shot for each move and the characters took three years to develop. The game is designed to promote and reward aggressive playing styles and was very successful in the arcade, both as a single player game and in two player battles. The home version also features two play modes not found in the arcade game; "Tug-of-War", where one player tries to pull the other player's energy bar over to his side, and "Endurance Play", where each player gets to choose four characters to do battle. Primal Rage will be available for the PlayStation on November 14 and we will have a review of the game in our next issue.



XPECTING

WHEN YOU HAVE FUCKING LASERS FROM INTERGALACTIC

KIERSHES COMING TO BE WHIZZING BY YOUR MELON LIKE A

SWARM OF SUPERSONIC YELLOW JACKETS

OR FAST FORWARD, IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE AS AERODYNAMIC AS POSSIBLE.

THEREFORE, I SHAVE MY ENTIRE BODY BEFORE EVERY RACE. AND WHEN

I'M FINISHED, I SIMPLY CLEAN THE SHAVING CREAM OFF MY MIRROR AND

POP IT BACK INTO MY PLAYSTATION®.

CyberSpeed



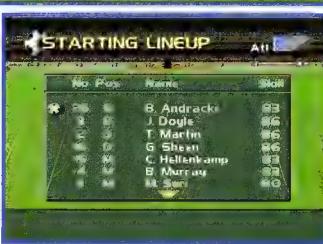
Oh, the
things we
do for you.



FIFA '96

EA SPORTS • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

EA Sports' "FIFA '96" looks to be a completely new soccer experience. The game features more than 3,000 (!) real player names, unlimited camera angles with 7 preset camera views, real-time commentary with over 15,000 phrases of play-by-play, provided by John Motson, new moves (including the Dummy, the Nutmeg and the Crossover Fake), 12 international leagues: England, Scotland, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Holland, Sweden, Brazil, America, Malaysia and World League, and video footage from World Cup USA '94. Using their "Virtua Stadium" technology, EA Sports has made use of SGI-rendered graphics, in the player animations and stadiums, and they are attempting to deliver the most complete soccer simulation ever. The beta version was slipped under our door, just as we went to press, and the game should be available at retail near the end of November. We will have a complete review of FIFA '96 in our January issue.



XPECTING

No Pain, No Game!



ALL NEW
MAYHEM
MOVES
LIKE THE
SHOCKING
"HAND
BUZZER"!



"NO RING CAN CONTAIN W.F. WRESTLEMANIA!"



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WRESTLING ACTION
THAN EVER—REVERSALS,
PILEDRIVERS AND
BODYSLAMS!

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ASSAULT RIGS

PSYGNOSIS • AVAILABLE JANUARY

Since featuring Psygnosis' "Assault Rigs" in our premiere issue, we have received a more complete version of the game, showing more levels and with improved graphics and game-play...we just had to show you! Assault Rigs is first-person tank combat at its finest, featuring a ton of levels and VERY addictive gameplay. Assault Rigs is more than a little reminiscent of the original "Combat" game for the Atari 2600. While common opinion currently holds that "Destruction Derby" and "Wipeout" are the must-haves in the Psygnosis stable, we believe that the real jewel is Assault Rigs. While these games feature the beautiful, 3D graphics that have become Psygnosis' trademark, early indications are that Assault Rigs has the long-term gameplay that is the bench-mark for a classic game. We hope to have a reviewable version of Assault Rigs in either our January or February issue and the game should ship to retail early next year.



XPECTIVE



When I find E.J.B.
I'll be performing
a little number
called "Death
Shrill in E Minor."
I hope he enjoys it
the first time because
nobody gets to
hear it twice.

For 1 or 2 Players

3D Morphing Terrain

VOX
A thoroughly
animatible
splatterfest. Now!
— Game Players

What Good Is A Sony® PlayStation™ If It Isn't
LOADED

KILLER TIP: Use speed to grab power ups.
SUBER WEAPON: Sonic Blast

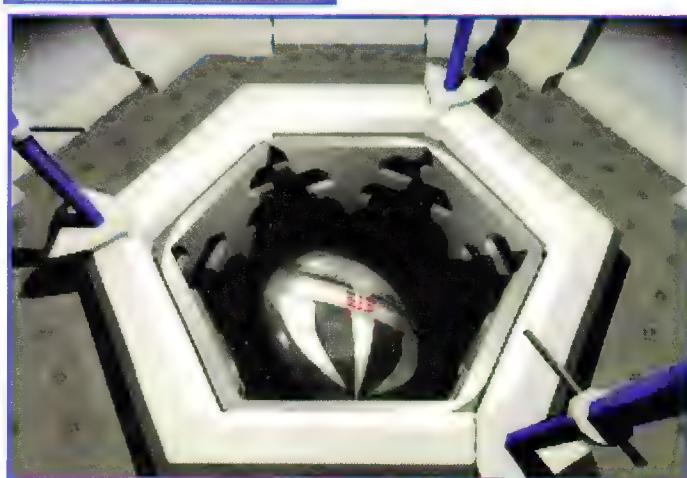
Grenadier
Grenadier.com

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DEFCON-5

DATA EAST • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

We have received a playable version of Data East's "Defcon 5", previewed in this section last month, and we believe that PlayStation owners are going to be in for a real treat when the game is released late this year. We have spent a considerable amount of time with the pre-beta version of the game and are prepared to offer some initial impressions. What immediately strikes you about Defcon 5 is the incredible depth of the game. Defcon 5 can't be pigeon-holed into any one type or style of game. It's mostly role-playing and puzzle solving, but there is a certain amount of "Doom"-style action and even a "Missile Command"-esque sequence, involving the targeting of enemy ships as their drones near your outpost. In addition, Defcon 5 is a timed game in that you have only 48 hours to get the self-destruct software going and get the heck out of Dodge. The gameplay is both tactical and action oriented and, with the game's first-person environment, completely unique. We will try and do editorial justice to Defcon 5 in the January issue of Dimension PS-X.



XPECTING



KILLER TIP not a speed demon – go in
blastin' or else risk gettin' surrounded

When I find E.J.B.
my balloon will be
red, he will go
splat!, and

Ell can be bimby
into bite-sized
chunks so I can
feed him to my
fuzzy bear Peroy.

Create Huge Explosions!

Possibly the
baldest title/
of the year

fzunk

— Game Players

3D Morphing Terrain

LOADED

PlayStation™

What Good Is A Sony® Playstation™ If It Isn't

LOADER!

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WEAPON OF CHOICE: Nettron Spheres
SUPER WEAPON: Homing Teddies

MADDEN '96

EA SPORTS • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

The much-anticipated Madden NFL '96 is almost ready for its PlayStation debut. The version you see before you, in spite of what you may have read elsewhere, is the first playable version of the game (as of October 17). Madden '96 features a number of broadcast quality features that find EA Sports attempting to duplicate the complete TV sports experience. The game features the commentary of Pat Summerall and John Madden, with James Brown in Hollywood and Leslie Visser on the sidelines, and 3D rendered versions of all 30 NFL stadiums. In total, there are 100 teams to play with and against, including all-Madden, Hall of Fame and past Super Bowl teams. The game is presented in a real-time, three-dimensional view, with motion-captured player animation and texture-mapped fields of play that can be viewed from multiple camera angles. As in any sports title, the key is gameplay and computer AI. How does Madden '96 stack up against the current king of the PlayStation gridiron, Sony Sports' "NFL GameDay"? We'll let you know next month.



XPECTING

CYBERSPEED

MINDSCAPE • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

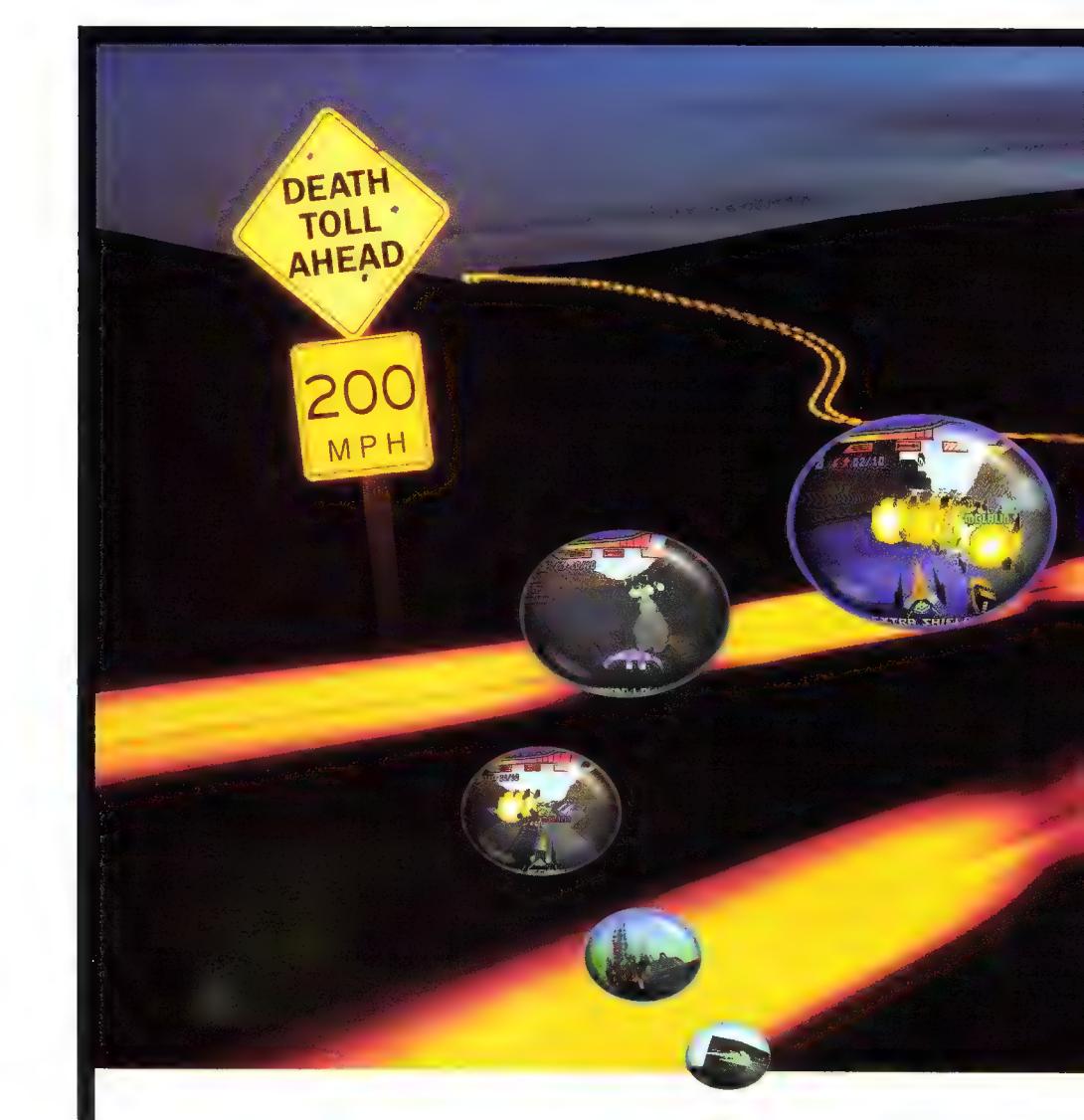
Mindscape's "Cyberspeed" is a futuristic, hovercraft racing game that has you competing against eight different racers (human or computer), over nine different tracks. The object of the race is to finish first and use every weapon in your arsenal to insure that you do. The game features a fast, texture-mapped polygon environment and an interesting twist on the hovercraft racing/combat theme. In Cyberspeed, your vehicle is suspended from a power line, from which it, and every other vehicle,

derives its power. By shooting opposing vehicles, you are attempting to knock them from (at least temporarily) the line, thus slowing them down and enabling you to move past them. It is a really cool feature and more than a little reminiscent of

X-Pecting • Page 23

the old arcade hit, "Gyruss". Look for Cyberspeed to release around the end of November. We will have a full review in the January issue of Dimension PS-X.



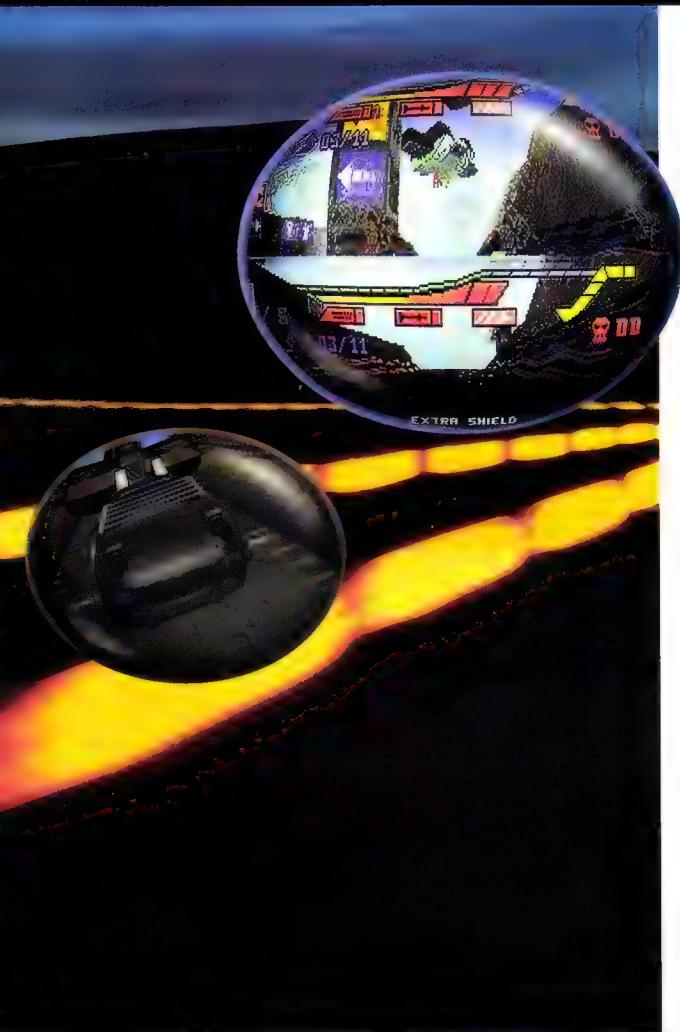


DEATH
TOLL
AHEAD

200
MPH

*"If your opponent doesn't
kill you, the road will!"*





BULLFROG
PRODUCTIONS LTD

What's next?

It's the asphalt-melting, head-to-head

(split screen) combat race game with mini guns.

Missile launchers. And a track that morphs in real

time to create crevices, barriers, and curves.

Just hop in your hovercraft (6 to choose from)

and hit the road (9 to choose from).

But beware. It'll hit back.

OCTANE
THE TRACK FIGHTS BACK

PLAYSTATION
SEGA SATURN
P C C D

<http://www.ea.com/octane.html> (for more information)

DARKSTALKERS

CAPCOM • AVAILABLE JANUARY

Available Xclusively on the PlayStation, Capcom's home version of the arcade hit, "Darkstalkers: The Night Warriors" will be arriving at retail, nationwide, early next year. Darkstalkers is a one or two-player game that introduces 10 of the greatest animated monster warriors from around the world: the Vampire, the Werewolf, the Frankenstein monster, the Zombie, the Mummy, the Samurai, the Merman, the Snowman, the Cat Woman and the Succubus. They have come together for the fight of their lives. Darkstalker features several fighting techniques not found elsewhere, including mid-air character blocking, the ability to charge-up special moves during battle, and an all-new combination system for executing moves. The game also features a "success meter" that enables players to gauge their performance and skill. We were given a semi-playable version of Darkstalkers for this preview and we can tell you that the cartoon graphics and animation are the equal of the arcade original. Look for a review of Darkstalkers in an upcoming issue.



XPECTING

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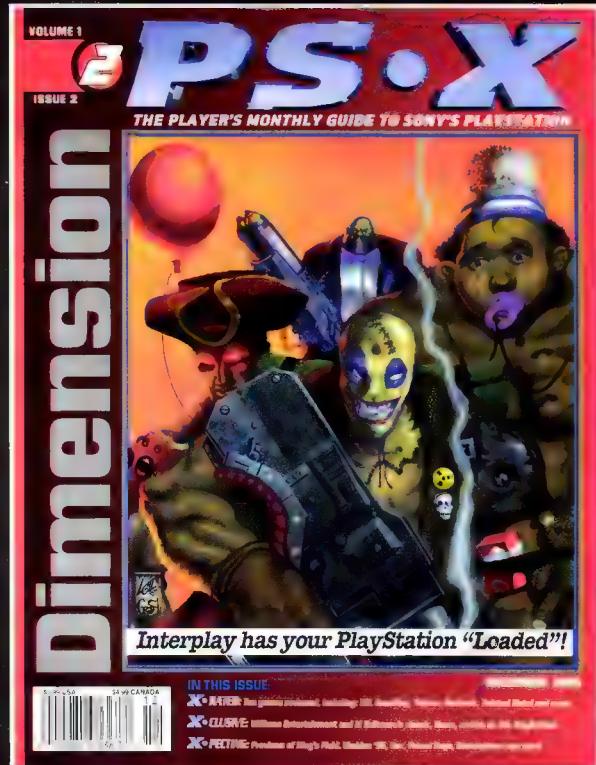
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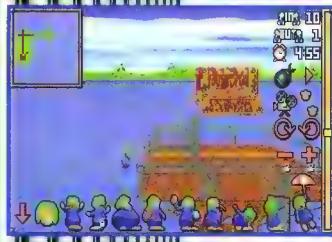
EASY... LOOK OVER HERE!

Volume 1 • Issue 3 • On Sale December 19, 1995

LEMMINGS 3D

PSYGNOSIS • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

So, you think that you've played every kind of Lemmings" imaginable? Psygnosis doesn't think so! In "Lemmings 3D", the little, mindless critters find themselves in a completely three-dimensional, texture-mapped world; a world with levels and challenges that range from snowy, ice-slicked worlds to colorful jelly bean factories (Jelly Bell is an official sponsor of the game), and you have to make use of your climbing, demolition, construction and rotation skills (among many others) to overcome obstacles as they appear. Lemmings 3D features 100 levels of play and they set you up for frustration and ecstasy on an escalating, level-by-level, basis. In addition, the game features cool stuff like ice skating lemmings sliding along iced-over terrain. Lemmings 3D should be available at retail by the end of the year, at which time you can be assured that your time will no longer be your own! Look for our review in the January issue of Dimension PS-X.



XPECTING

GEX

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

The wise-cracking gecko with an attitude is taking his act to the big room, with the introduction of Crystal Dynamics' "Gex", for the PlayStation. Gex has proven to be the platform defining title for 3DO, with great action/platform fun and humor that finds Gex (voice-over by HBO's Dana Ghouley) trapped in bad '70's TV land - complete with arcane references to Scooby Doo, those very, very bad kung fu action pictures and the Brady Bunch. Gex flips his tail and tongue as he tries to defeat the forces of his arch-enemy, "Res", gathering every golden fly and power-up that he can get his sticky feet and extended tongue on.



Nobody is safe from the wrath of Gex's tongue...not the bad guys in the game or the social icons that he lampoons (including...gasp! Johnny and Ed). Look for the lizard to do big business on the PS this holiday season. He has been one of the 3DO's best performers and should continue the

same trend on Sony's super machine. Gex should be available at retail around Thanksgiving and we will have a review of the game in our January issue..."Hey Scoob...let's get back to the Mystery Van!"



LOADED

PUBLISHED BY INTERPLAY

DEVELOPED BY GREMLIN

Our cover feature this month is a product of the combined efforts of UK based developer Gremlin Software and Interplay. "Loaded" is just that...loaded with levels (15), characters (6) and intense, straightforward arcade gameplay that has you blowing away everything in your path. We will dispense with the formality of the story and get right to gameplay.

Loaded's six characters (for those of you keeping score, they are in no certain order: Mamma, Vox, Bounca, Cap 'N' Hands, Fwank and Butch. Each character has its own unique weapon, special weapon and mobility/armor strength. For example, Vox is very fast with light armor and a main weapon that the development team describes as "Voice Synthesis". She can get out of jams by running through them, but, before powering-up her main weapon, she has very little fire power and is susceptible to quick damage. Her trump card is her special weapon, which can cause huge amounts of death and destruction (called the "Nag Blast"). Conversely, Mamma is VERY slow, with good armor and a basic weapon that is fairly strong (the "Big Bang Stick") and Mamma's special weapon is



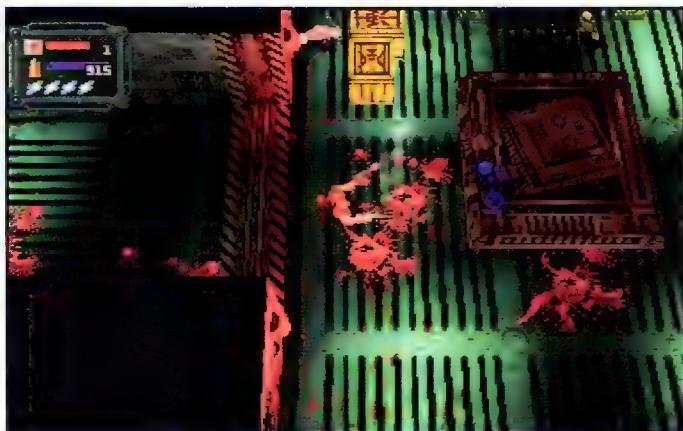
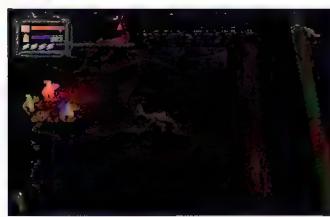
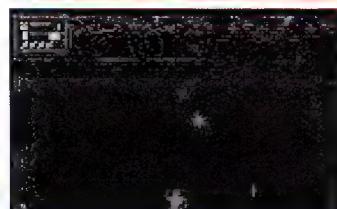
absolutely lethal...the "Tantrum". Player selection is the last time you will need to think and make big, life-altering decisions because, after this, it's time for a good ol' fashioned shoot-em-up!

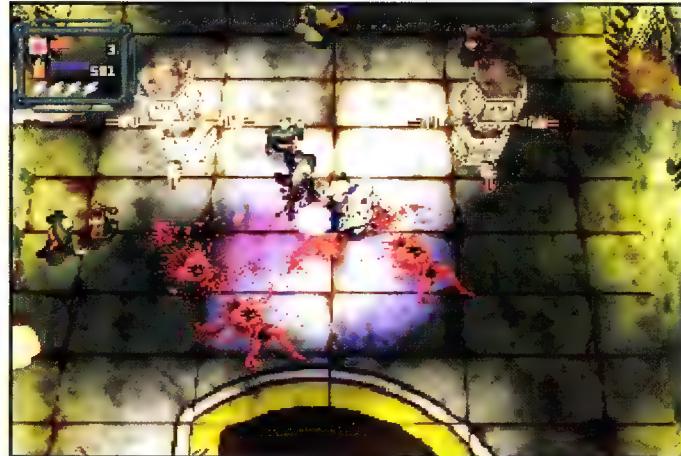
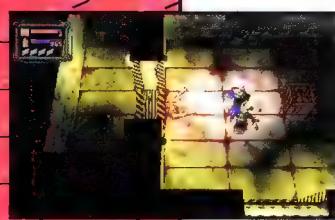
Each of Loaded's 15 levels employs the same basic design and strategy. You start out with a weak weapon, immediately access two power-ups in nearby crates to develop a medium strength weapon. You must search for the different colored key cards that allow you access to the different areas in each level. Standing in your way are rats, zombies, gun-toting, 30 shots pumped into the body before dying, bad dudes and your basic bald guys with MAJOR attitude problems. The strategy is simple, run around, blast the hell out of everything, try to suffer as little damage as possible, get the keys and find the power-ups and medical kits that will restore your health. Then, it's on to the next level. Sound easy? I guarantee you, it's not! If you want to see all of Loaded's 15 levels, bring a friend. The two player cooperative mode is the way to beat this game.

In concept, Loaded is a cross between



X T R E M E





"Smash TV" and "Doom". The game is presented in a top-down, 3/4 isometric view. This view can be scaled in and out to the player's liking, although I don't recommend the close-up view. You cannot see the enemy ahead of you and one thing that you don't want to have happen to you, as you play Loaded, is to get trapped. Play as far "up" in view as the game will let you and then plan out your attacks. In the earlier levels, the bad guys are pretty dumb and not very aggressive. They will basically stand in line like cattle to the slaughter. Take them down one-by-one, and don't press your luck by charging through the corridors.

From a presentation standpoint, the graphics are dark and VERY gory. Although the animation in Loaded can certainly be classified as cartoon-style violence, there is blood everywhere and, when you kill a dude, his guts stay behind to mark your path...coooool! In some of the upper levels, you find yourself among rolling hills and graveyards, with a depth that is very believ-



XTR E M E



able, akin to the feeling I used to get when playing Sega's "Thunderblade", in the arcade. Graphically, Loaded is very well done and does a great job of creating an appropriately somber and almost medieval atmosphere. This feeling is accentuated by the game's great soundtrack, which features tracks ranging in style from a sort of techno-rap to music with strong baroque and gothic overtones...again, very cool.

My only complaint with Loaded lies in the sense of "sameness" that I began to feel, as I moved through the game. The levels are very long and there are a lot of them; but the basic task at hand never changes. In addition, a minor annoyance

are the bad guys that,

because of the game's isometric viewpoint, become hidden behind walls (along with your character), causing you to absorb damage because of the game's lack of concern for this inevitability.

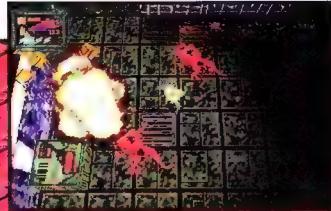
These complaints being stated, Loaded asserts itself as one of the premiere PlayStation titles during this holiday season. It is what I like to refer to as a "gamer's game"...much like Sony's "Jumping Flash". It will challenge even the most seasoned game player to his core and is a challenge well worth undertaking, but not for the slow of hand or reflexes...a great gift for the 15-25 year old on your Christmas shopping list!

D. Winding



The Bottom Line...

Loaded asserts itself as one of the premiere PlayStation titles during this holiday season. It is what I like to refer to as a "gamer's game"...much like Sony's "Jumping Flash". It will challenge even the most seasoned game player to his core and is a challenge well worth undertaking, but not for the slow of hand or reflexes...a great gift for the 15-25 year old on your Christmas shopping list!



89%

NFL GAMEDAY

PUBLISHED BY SONY SPORTS ~ DEVELOPED BY SONY INTERACTIVE STUDIOS



I LIVE for a good video football game. Over the past decade, I have played every game that was developed for every system...Gamestar's "GFL Football" on the Amiga and Commodore 64, the original Atari football game for the 2600, "Super Action Football" for the Colecovision, the Madden and Montana series' on all 16 and 32-bit platforms...everything! I have lived through the disappointments; computer AI that was almost non-existent, inadequate season play and fictional players created by programmers in Japan who, up until two years ago, had barely heard of the game of football and numerous games that seemed to have it all, only to fall short after one week of play (a week that, by its end, found me whipping the computer teams mercilessly). Well, that era has ended and there's a new sheriff in town!



Sony Sports' maiden effort for the PlayStation is one of those rare games, like a "Super Mario", a "Road Rash" or a "World Series Baseball", that not only creates a new target for other developers and publishers to shoot at, but completely changes your view of electronic entertainment. If I only had one shot at designing a football game, "NFL GameDay" is the game that I would want



to create. This game goes beyond any pre-conceived notions you may have about arcade football, or football simulations, to blend the two into one cohesive, brilliant package.

NFL GameDay has it all: a gorgeous 3D environment that allows you to play in real-time 3D, through one of four different vantage points (including a QB's view that drops you right onto the playing field), all of the NFL teams and players - realistically rendered, using SGI workstations (including the expansion Jaguars and Panthers), full season play and key statistical tracking over the course of the season, an instant replay feature that actually helps teach you the subtleties of the real game (it is a useful tool for diagramming plays and looking for defensive tendencies in any given formation as you play through a game), a massive playbook that includes single-back, run-n-shoot and 3-wide formations (the playbook was designed with the help of everybody's favorite Montana successor and record breaking running...err...quarterback, Steve Bono), the ability to trade players and either handicap yourself, as you become better at the game, against a weaker human or computer opponent (the design team has also included the ability to draft free agents...some that look to be members of the design team itself),



X-RATED





special moves that include spins, jukes, stiff arms, jumps, dives and swims (and the ability to put the hurt on a ball carrier through the oil' clothesline), and adjustable levels of difficulty, including the option of having injuries affect the course of your season.

As long as the feature list may be, it is not the "straw that stirs the drink", as one Reginald Martinez Jackson might say. This distinction goes to the star of the show in NFL GameDay...the incredible computer AI that is right at the heart of the game's brilliance. People who have played any of the more well thought-of computer football simulations (the "Front Page Sports Football" and "Ultimate Football" series') will argue that these products represent the most sophisticated football model(s) to date, but the sacrifice has been, with both of these products, that the arcade game has been absolutely no fun and virtually unplayable. NFL GameDay takes situational offensive and defensive strategies (taking into account down, yardage



X-RATED



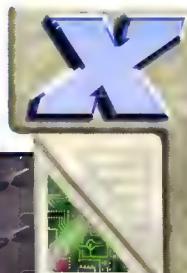
to go, defensive and offensive formations and probabilities) and gives the computer the ability to respond to the human player's tendencies and play calling. If you go into a shotgun on 3rd and 25 from your end of the field and chuck one into triple coverage...you're dead; deflections, interceptions, fumbles and other forms of nastiness are the result of your playing into the computer's hands as it was sitting back in a "Dime". The same holds true when the computer has the ball...no more dumb offenses where the computer blindly calls a running play on third and long. This computer opponent (adjusted for the actual NFL team's strengths and weaknesses) will pick you

apart quicker than ol' Joe

himself...no more calling the same defensive formation and alignment over and over again...you will get waxed as you've never been waxed before! Best of all, the computer does all of this, while giving the player the most entertaining game of arcade football that I have ever had the pleasure of playing.

If it sounds like I LOVE NFL GameDay...I do! Simply put, it is the best football game I have ever played and a game that no PlayStation sports lover should be without. If you haven't purchased the hardware yet...run out and do so. It is the only way you can play (or should I say live?) NFL GameDay.

D. Winding



The Bottom Line...

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WARHAWK

PUBLISHED BY SONY • DEVELOPED BY SINGLE TRAC

Wow! Before I even begin this review, let me assure you of one thing...you will not soon forget your time with SCE's "Warhawk". New industry player, and "Twisted Metal" and Warhawk developer, Single Trac has, as they say, announced their presence with authority!

Warhawk puts you behind the controls of an XA-168, the primary assault craft of the Unified International Forces. The Warhawk is armed to its teeth with destructive force. You have a machine gun, rockets, swarm missiles, lock-on missiles and plasma cannons. In addition, power-ups are scattered throughout the game's six levels that also include a "flash bomb" and "doomsday bomb". You begin the game in the "Desert Zone", where your primary goal is to retrieve the energy canister. You are immediately thrown in the thick of battle, in a real-time, 3D environment. The game's next five levels follow a similar course, with a number of energy canisters that vary in quantity from level to level.

What makes Warhawk a great game, is the combination of arcade shooting



action and campaign strategy. You must manage your ammunition, not burning it too early in a level, perform different flight maneuvers to evade enemy fire, adjust flight speed and make use of your afterburners as required, and alter your view to get a better picture of the surrounding area, or to help you maneuver through tight quarters. (Warhawk has three different views available in the game: cockpit, a near chase view and a far chase view.) If you feel like flying at warp speed and mindlessly shooting everything in sight...forget it! You will burn your three available craft and be out in the cold...game over! Warhawk thankfully has a password system that is level driven. The game is VERY tough, even on the "Granny" level and patience is definitely rewarded. I successfully completed the first four levels by maintaining a half-throttle air speed and by taking out stationary targets with the swarm missiles first, then using lock-on missiles to take out the big craft and objects. (Rockets have limited use in the Desert and Canyon zones, but have utility when attacking enemy aircraft.) The other key to success lies in managing speed.



X-RATED





As I said, you want to maintain at about half-speed, but you will need to accelerate when putting yourself into position to launch an attack on any of the "boss" craft..fire, then accelerate again.

Graphically, Warhawk is breathtaking, especially in the Canyon Zone, the Volcano Zone and in the Airship Zone. The canyon walls and your craft reflect off of the river flowing below, giving the Canyon level a sense of reality that I have rarely experienced in gaming, on any platform. In the Airship Zone, walls, tunnels and enemy objects scroll fluidly and at a fast frame rate and the whole package is very tight. The coolest part of this level, is when you are first dropped into the combat zone. A giant airship lies in front of you and you are being attacked from all sides. As you are trying to get your bearings, you realize that there is a large opening in the ship. You tentatively begin moving



X-RATED



toward the craft when, at its edge, you realize that you can fly into it, over the interior flight deck! But, that's not the end of it. There is an opening in the floor that allows access to the lower level of the ship. Once there, you begin a corridor race against a series of shutters...as you race through the warehouse. Three of the six canisters that you must acquire are in this area and it is an absolute, blow-you-away, experience! And the final level, in the middle of a lightning storm, has to be seen to be believed!

But the thing that really kicks Warhawk into the "A" rated, must-buy category is the music.



The Bottom Line...

Warhawk is tough...very tough, and absolutely worth the effort. Skip the cheesy between level FMV (video game "acting" is normally bad, B-movie kind of stuff, but these guys need to give their union cards back!), and go right into the conflict. Warhawk delivers on the next generation promise and gives PlayStation owners one of the best arcade shooters I have ever played...don't miss it!



96%

RED X

D. Winding

TWISTED METAL

PUBLISHED BY SONY ~ DEVELOPED BY SINGLE TRAIL

In "Twisted Metal", you are involved in a "kill-or-be-killed" competition throughout the city of Los Angeles, driving your armed vehicle and taking on all competition in 6 different areas of the city. The stated goal is to destroy your competitor and emerge victorious - where a grand prize awaits you that could fulfill your wildest fantasies...real or imagined.

Twisted Metal throws the player into action, in an indoor arena, where he must face-off against a single competitor. If you beat him, then it is on to the next level and tougher, more plentiful competition. You can assume the persona of one of 12 different characters and vehicles, each with its particular strengths and weaknesses...most revolving around maneuverability, strength and speed. There are fire missiles, homing missiles, freeze missiles, power missiles, rear missiles, drop mines, tire spikes, catapults, rear flames, oil slicks and turbos, in addition to your basic machine gun, to give destructive power to your vehicle and each of the 12 vehicles has its own special weapon. In addition, two-player, split-



screen competition is supported - where players can battle within the arena of their choice.

The best, and most accurate, way to look at Twisted Metal is as a big game of "tag". In this case, being "it" has a decidedly more nasty side effect, induced primarily by a guided missile up your flank...you DON'T want to be "it". The real-time environments, where you can turn corners, shoot down alleys and drive in reverse, are extremely cool and allow for a number of great hiding places. This is the key strategy that you must use in the game...get to a "safe" corner, call-up your favorite weapon and wait for the poor sap to mosey past your corner...BOOM! He's it. The bad guys require a number of hits before you can assist them on to the other world, depending on the size and strength of the vehicle and the weapon(s) used. TM also does a great job of giving the player a sense of impending doom and of being chased. In addition to finding safe spots, you will want to make liberal use of the rear-view mirror and your radar. Radar comes in handy when looking for one of the recharge stations that are littered throughout the game's six levels.



X-RATED





My favorite way to play is as Mr. Grimm (the motorcycle), from the cockpit view and in "Cyburbia" (level 6). This level is an absolute blast, complete with suburbanites enjoying refreshments on their front lawns; well...until you mow them down! There's even a depiction of the LA River ("Sherman, set for 1978", the drag/chicken scene in the movie "Grease") that you have access to in real-time!

Twisted Metal has quite a bit of "grabbing power". The 3D world is fast and detailed, although a little rough around the edges, which is to be expected when you see the words "fast" and "detailed" in a 3D game. As compared to Sony and Single Trac's "other" game, "Warhawk", the 3D environment is much rougher. But the tradeoff is that in Warhawk your environment is somewhat limited but, in TM you can go anywhere.

It is what lies beneath the surface,

X-RATED



however, that really tells the tale of Twisted Metal...a helluva-lot of gameplay. Even after beating TM, you will find yourself wanting to play again and again and the two player game approaches the same level of interaction as the "Street Fighter" series. For me, it is the sheer size of the game's six levels that I found to be unique to any PlayStation game thus far. In "River Park Rumble", for example, there is even an outdoor ice skating rink complete with skaters and a flood control channel. (We won't comment on the inconsistency between outdoor skating rinks and the greater Los Angeles area...and yes, you can mow them down as well.)

D. Winding



The Bottom Line...

93%

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VIEWPOINT

PUBLISHED BY ELECTRONIC ARTS - DEVELOPED BY VISUAL CONCEPTS



During the brief time that I owned, a stupidly expensive and not-remotely-as-powerful-as-PSX Neo*Geo game system, the only cartridge that I thought was worth the obscene amount of cash I paid for it was Viewpoint. This shooter from American Sammy took me back to the days of Zaxxon, the ancient coin-op shooter that used an angled overview perspective. Viewpoint had that same view, but with very pretty (for the Neo) graphics and extremely pretty bosses. I was hooked.

Now, through some incestuous licensing arrangement, that I probably couldn't understand in a zillion years, Electronic Arts has released Viewpoint for the PlayStation. The gameplay is untouched, which is a good thing, and the graphics have been completely redone with SGI machines, which makes Viewpoint more gorgeous than ever.

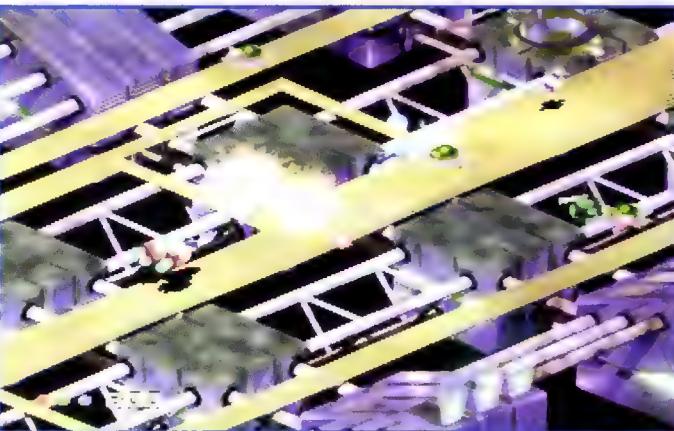
I don't really recall Viewpoint's storyline, but there's no particular

reason to care — what, like you need motivation to blow the crap out of aliens? — so let's jump headlong into the gameplay. Viewpoint has six levels of play and each level is divided into three areas. As your cute little ship flies through each area, it's accosted by a bizarre variety of objects and aliens, from giant rolling tires to flocks of flying fish. At the end of each level is a boss — no, really, I swear — that takes more than the usual two or three shots to destroy.

Viewpoint uses only two action buttons. The first button fires your laserbeam. If you tap the fire but-



X-RATED



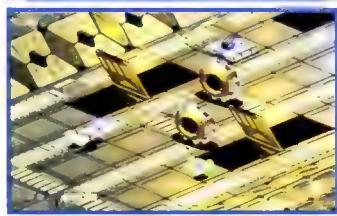


ton, you can shoot rapidly, but if you hold down the button, you can charge up a more powerful beam. One of the keys to success in Viewpoint, other than memorizing the enemy attack patterns, is knowing which enemies to shoot rapidly and which to shoot with a charged-up beam. The second button unleashes one of your three "smart bomb" special weapons. There are a few types of specials, my fave being the rolling wave of fire.

Viewpoint has four levels of difficulty, but defaults to the easiest level. Why, you ask? Because even at that "wimpy" setting, your enemies fill the screen with bullets, making it one hell of a trick to survive. The nasty difficulty is offset by the kind password system, which rewards you with a password when-



X-RATED



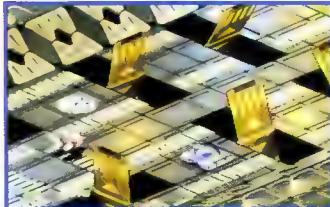
ever you make it to a new area, not just a new level. You also have three continues, although the password keeps track of how many you've used to get to where you are; so, it's wise to replay earlier levels until you can make it through without continuing.

A major feature that EA was planning to add to Viewpoint was a two-player simultaneous mode, but it was MIA in my review copy. According to Electronic Arts, "The one-player mode lets the game deliver the blistering speed that two-player mode wouldn't." Is this their nice way of saying that they were experiencing

the horror of slowdown with two ships on the screen? We must conclude that either EA isn't up to the programming challenge or the PSX isn't quite as handy with 2-D graphics as it is with 3-D graphics.

The verdict: Viewpoint is a graphically gorgeous and VERY difficult shooter that leaves Philosoma eating its dust. It's too bad Electronic Arts wasn't able to pull off the two-player mode, which would've put my rating near 90%, but it's a nifty game regardless. Now how 'bout a PlayStation version of the Neo*Geo game League Bowling? (Or perhaps not.)

Z. Meston



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85%



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TEKKEN

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY NAMCO



If you are just pulling your PlayStation out of the box for the first time and wondering what you should feed it, Namco has been pretty busy putting together strong launch titles for you and I to enjoy. First came "Ridge Racer", arguably the finest arcade racing game of all time, then "Air Combat", an arcade flying/combat game that our own Mr. Glenn Rubenstein found wonderfully playable, in his review in our premiere issue; and now "Tekken", the hit arcade, one-on-one fighting game. It's been six months since I first played Tekken on a Japanese PlayStation, and I'm still (if you'll pardon the gratuitous profanity) damn impressed. Yes, it's a fighting game—lord knows the world needs one more of those—but it has an irresistible visual appeal supplied by an eclectic cast of eight texture-mapped, motion-capture-animated characters. Three of my personal faves are Law, a jumpsuit-clad karate master with a no-doubt-intentional resemblance to Bruce Lee; Paul, a rugged biker



with a vertical blonde 'do that would make Guile weep tears of envy; and Jack, a cyborg with a hysterically disproportionate upper body. (They're called squats, Jack, look into 'em.)

But it gets better: there's ANOTHER group of eight characters that are revealed as you beat the game with each of the original crew. These characters have almost identical moves to the originals, but they look completely different—particularly Kuma, a humongous bear almost as tall as the screen. You can even play as the final boss, Heihachi, if you beat Tekken without losing a single round. For those readers who went to public schools,

I'll do the math; that's 17 characters to choose from.

The gameplay in Tekken is different from the PSX's other 3D fighter, Battle Arena Toshinden, in two major ways. First, there aren't any magic fireballs or other projectile attacks; the characters in Tekken merely punch, kick, and throw. (The throws are the most visually impressive attacks in Tekken, such as the crowd-pleaser in which Law runs up



X-RATED





the chest of his opponent, flips in mid-air and slams his opponent flat.) Second, there aren't any "ring outs" in Tekken, as the foreground scrolls endlessly in either direction. No accidental or intentional suicide jumps here!

Tekken originally appeared as an arcade coin-op, but the PlayStation version is considerably enhanced. The gameplay is faster, the computer-generated music has been replaced with CD music (although you can turn the computer-generated tunes back on) and there are supremely weird, full-motion video ending sequences for each character. My favorite addition is the flawless conversion of the classic Namco coin-op Galaga, that you play while the game is loading. (Namco also used this gimmick in Ridge Racer, which lets you play a quick game of Galaxian.) You're even

X-RATED



Szechwan



Venezia



King Georgelisland

rewarded with an 18th (!) secret character, if you beat all eight of Galaga's levels.

Yes, there are flaws to be found in Tekken and we, hard-to-please

reviewers, always look for 'em. The characters' facial expressions don't change and I guarantee you my expression would change if someone punched me in the head six times in a row. The little poofs of green and blue smoke accompanying each blow are rather goofy. There's a fair share of cheap stuff, especially the ability to repeatedly whack opponents when they're on the ground. But these are nit-picks that only players who enjoy beat-'em-ups, a little TOO much, will get worked up about.

The verdict: With its horde of characters and its spectacular array of moves, Tekken is the most visually impressive fighting game on any home system and a wonderful example of the frightening power of the PlayStation. Now we just need to wait impatiently for Namco to convert the even-more-impressive "Tekken 2".

Z. Meston



Monument Valley



Szechwan



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93%



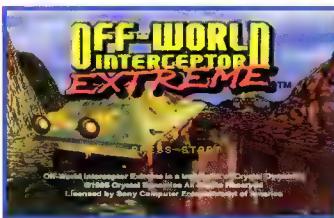
OFF-WORLD INTERCEPTOR

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

No more than a few minutes after I inserted the final lame joke into last month's review of "Total Eclipse Turbo", Bossman Dave assigned me to review the second 3D-to-PSX conversion from Crystal Dynamics. (Well, it was actually a few weeks, but time flies when you're weaseling reviews.) This time around, the port is "Off-world Interceptor Extreme", a 3D shooter, best described as Total Eclipse on wheels.

You take the controls of a futuristic off-road car, driving and shooting—mostly shooting—your way through a whopping five worlds and 26 levels. The worlds are "on rails" to a degree; you can drive left and right a certain distance, but you can't turn around and go backwards. Then again, with the time limits for each level, you wouldn't want to. At the end of each world is (surprise!) a mighty boss with small, vulnerable areas that, fortunately, flash when you shoot them.

The cars in OWI Extreme are versatile vehicles, to say the least. They pack three types of weaponry: laser cannons, plasma bombs (good for getting tailgaters off your butt), and missiles. They can leap and hover above the ground for extended periods of time. They can even call in air strikes (a.k.a.



"smart bombs") that wipe out every bad guy on the screen.

OWI Extreme has four modes of play: Training, Story, Arcade, and Battle. The Training mode lets you cruise through levels and get the feel of the control system without any pesky enemies blowing you to hell; the Arcade mode lets you play through the worlds in any order; and the Battle mode is a two-player confrontation that well and truly sucks. (More on that later.) The Story mode takes the player through the worlds, in a linear fashion, while displaying full-motion video clips that shamelessly rip off the cable comedy show Mystery Science Theater 3000, as two silhouetted smart-asses crack jokes and drop more obscure pop-cultural references than Dennis Miller. (The story



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I heard is that the producers of the game realized that the full-motion video was SO lame that they added the MST3K stuff at the last minute to salvage it.)

Unlike Total Eclipse Turbo, OWI Extreme has a host of impressive enhancements over the 3DO original. Most noticeably, the graphics, which were choppy and slow on the 3DO, are fast as lightning and as smooth as "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter" on the PlayStation. Passwords are awarded to the player after each group of five levels in the Story mode, and they can be saved to a memory card. The PlayStation's button-laden controller allows easier access to the weaponry and there are now two views of the action:

a chase view
(old) and a



The Bottom Line...

83%

The verdict: Off-world Interceptor Extreme is another Crystal Dynamics title that doesn't quite make full use of the nifty silicon inside the PSX, but it's a more enjoyable (and vastly more humorous) shoot-'em-up than Total Eclipse Turbo. The two-player mode is feeble, but the one-player mode is varied, challenging, and fun.



cockpit view (new).

One thing that hasn't changed during the conversion process, is the god-awful two-player mode. The screen is split in half, vertically, making it impossible to see the road ahead, and impossible to tell what's going on. This game was meant for one player, and wedging in a half-baked two-player mode doesn't improve it at all.

The verdict: Off-world Interceptor Extreme is another Crystal Dynamics title that doesn't quite make full use of the nifty silicon inside the PSX, but it's a more enjoyable (and vastly more humorous) shoot-'em-up than Total Eclipse Turbo. The two-player mode is feeble, but the one-player mode is varied, challenging, and fun.

Z. Meston

WWF WRESTLEMANIA

PUBLISHED BY RECLAM - DEVELOPED BY MIDWAY



It's my belief that one of the rites of passage from boyhood to manhood is realizing that professional wrestling is not a real sport, but a staged performance — kind of like going to the theater, except with steroid-crazed, sweat-drenched, 400-pound fat guys instead of actual thespians. Having gone through the rite almost two weeks ago, I've fallen sadly out of touch with the various wrestling organizations. That's why I was shocked to find out that most of the WWF's big-name wrestlers have since moved to the WCW, leaving the WWF a pale shadow of itself. How would "WWF WrestleMania: The Arcade Game" (based on the very recently released Midway arcade coin-op) be entertaining without Hulk Hogan and his 26-inch pythons or Randy "Macho Man" Savage and his "Snap into a Slim Jim!" endorsements?

Well, I'm pleased to say that WWF WrestleMania is enormously entertaining, thanks to brilliant programmers — in this case, the same group of coders and artists at Midway (led by Mark Turnell) that developed one of my favorite coin-ops of all time, NBA Jam. They've applied the over-the-top gameplay of NBA Jam to the ALREADY over-the-top WWF and come out with the best wrestling game I've ever played.

WWF WrestleMania has eight sharply digitized WWF "characters," from the grotesquely buff Lex Luger to the obscenely overweight Yokozuna. (Yoko, baby, I think it's time you make a call to Susan Powter and stop the madness.) Each character has an abundance of regular and special moves, activated with the five action buttons (two punches, two kicks, one block). Wrestlers can get their foes in headlocks, jump off the top turnbuckle and even throw their opponents outside the ring and smash them into the cement floor. Unlike Acclaim's wrestling games, in which all the wrestlers had the same moves, the wrestlers here have their own arsenals of unique moves, most of them so crazy-looking that you can't help laughing out loud. WWF WrestleMania also allows combinations



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in which wrestlers land a ridiculous series of blows (more than 30 with certain characters).

WWF WrestleMania has four game options. The Intercontinental Title mode is the easier one-player mode, with 1-on-1 matches, then 2-on-1 and a final 3-on-1 match. The WWF Title mode is the toughest one-player mode, with 2-on-1 and 3-on-1 matches and a final 4-on-1 Royal Rumble. The Head-to-Head two-player mode is a simple best of three match. Lastly, the Cooperative two-player mode has you and your pal wrestling all eight characters in the game, two at a time. Unfortunately, the Cooperative mode is plagued with loading delays, as the action pauses for a good five to ten seconds

The verdict: WWF WrestleMania is the funniest and most entertaining wrestling game I've played since Pro Wrestling on the 8-bit NES. (Remember THAT one?) It's also a decent alternative to the 3-D PSX fighters and a superb alternative to Mortal Kombat 3.



MARK'S TIP #3

CLIMB THE TURNBUCKLE AND LEAP AT YOUR OPPONENT, USING THE JOYSTICK TO GIVE YOUR FLIGHT. THESE ATTACKS CANNOT BE BLOCKED; HOWEVER, THEY CAN BE PICKED OFF WITH A WELL-TIMED KICK.

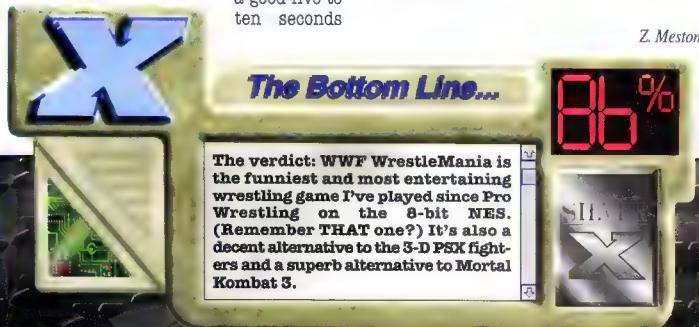


when a new character is loaded into memory. (Between this and the MK3 Shang Tsung debacle, I'm getting a little concerned about the PlayStation's memory limitations.)

The graphics in WWF WrestleMania are nicely ported from the coin-op and the digitized animation is the smoothest I've seen in a PSX game; although, the characters are admittedly puny when compared to the screen-filling polygon fighters of Tekken or Battle Arena Toshinden. I particularly like the goofy special moves that combine the digitized graphics with hand-drawn graphics to make them even more visually appealing (and hilarious). The sound effects are also quite good, with announcers Jim McMahon (president of the WWF) and Jerry Lawler (an aging wrestler/comedian, Andy Kaufman) spewing sound bites during each match.

The verdict: WWF WrestleMania is the funniest and most entertaining wrestling game I've played since Pro Wrestling on the 8-bit NES. It's also a decent alternative to the 3-D PSX fighters and a superb alternative to MK3.

Z. Meston



NBA JAM: TE

PUBLISHED BY ACCLAIM - DEVELOPED BY IGIANA



EXPERIENCED PLAYERS (most games played)

1ST	HAR	33	.727
2ND	CHR	31	.774
3RD	TOM	25	.760
4TH	CSR	22	.818
5TH	ZIG	21	.428
6TH	GJV	20	.900



The "NBA Jam" phenomena has been well-chronicled. This game, along with Midway's "Mortal Kombat" series, has done more to contribute to the financial fortunes of Midway and Acclaim Entertainment, Inc. than probably all of their other titles combined. The game mixes an arcade-style, pickup basketball game with some rough and tumble "fighting" to create one of the biggest arcade and 16-bit hits of the past five years.

Technically, there is little wrong with Acclaim's "NBA Jam Tournament Edition". As you would expect of any PlayStation arcade game translation, it is letter-perfect. It has all of the animation, large characters, big-head, baby and giant modes, player scaling, all of the color, secret players and codes, bigger players, 120 NBA "stars", 9 point shots from the hot spots, Super Jam power-ups, rookie and all-star teams, 3-5 players per team, same team match-ups, a tournament mode, player substitutions after every



quarter, injuries and fatigue factors, a 5-speed juice mode, 8 player attributes and more...basically, everything but the locker room sink!

If you are an NBA Jam fan, you will be in heaven! The only problem I have with the title is that most of the current PlayStation owners have experienced NBA Jam in one form or another. There is a certain kind of "been there, done that" feeling that I go through when I sit down to play the game. Graphically, it is beautiful and the gameplay is as solid as ever, but that ol' "Dr. Dunkenstein" feeling is just not quite there. It's like what my old Econ 101 professor referred to as "the

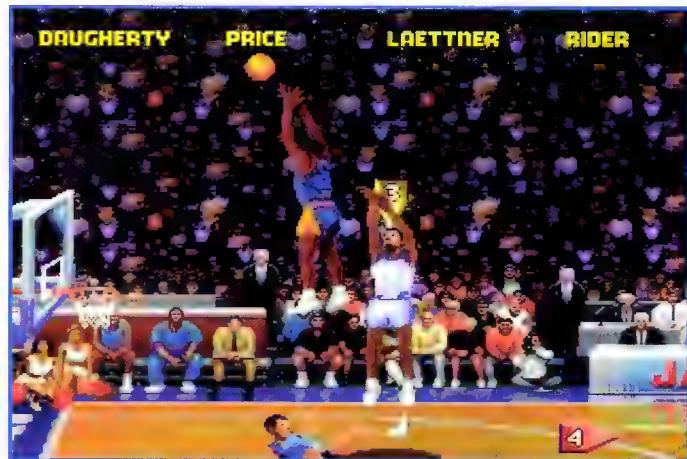


WINNING STREAK

1ST	CHR	19 WINS	24-7
2ND	GJV	18 WINS	18-2
3RD	TOM	8 WINS	19-6
4TH	CSR	6 WINS	18-4
5TH	ZIG	6 WINS	9-12
6TH	MJT	5 WINS	13-7



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law of diminishing returns". The first time was wonderful, one of the best experiences of my life. The second time was great, but not quite as good as the first. The tenth time, I was bored and moving on to something else.

What would have been cool, if I can play Joe-media, game designer for a moment, would be to take the NBA Jam franchise and move it into beautiful 3D, like "Toshinden" for hoops. THAT would have been something! To be able to move Clyde the Glide through three-dimensional, texture-mapped space, lift and execute a thunderous

jam through a ball of flame...that would have been very, very cool! Obviously, it also would have taken time, money and more than considerable risk, if you take the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" approach to game publishing...maybe next year.

As it stands, the development team at Iguana has been able to get everything that an NBA Jam fan could hope for in to one CD. If you have religiously played the series at home and the arcade, and hoped that some of the limitations and weaknesses that you found in the 16-bit versions could magically disappear, then you are in for a treat. However, if you are a more casual fan of the game, there probably isn't much here to get you to toss 60 bucks across the counter. NBA Jam TE is currently available at your favorite games retailer.

D. Winding

The Bottom Line...

If you have religiously played the series at home and the arcade, and hoped that some of the limitations and weaknesses that you found in the 16-bit versions could magically disappear, then you are in for a treat. However, if you are a more casual fan of the game, there probably isn't much here to get you to toss 60 bucks across the counter.

84%



PHILOSOMA

PUBLISHED BY SONY — DEVELOPED BY SCE JAPAN



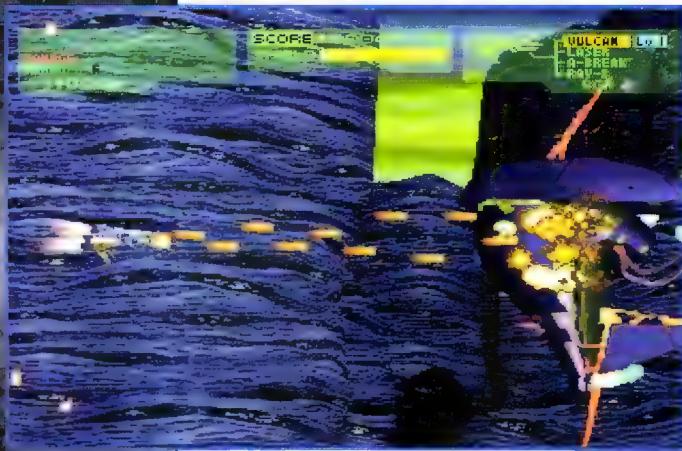
If you were (or are) one of the sixteen million owners of a Super NES, you might remember a nifty little shooter named Axelay. This 1993 Konami cart was a shoot-'em-up with a twist: instead of presenting the action from a single viewpoint throughout the game, it alternated between vertically-scrolling and horizontally-scrolling levels. "Philosoma" takes that gameplay idea and runs with it. There's a vertically-scrolling view; a long-range horizontally-scrolling view; a close-up horizontal view that makes your ship (and your enemies) considerably bigger; a behind-the-ship view; an in-front-of-the-ship-looking-backward view; a three-quarters angled-overhead view; and an inside-the-belly-button-of-the-ship's-pilot view. (No, just kidding, it's an inside-the-left-sock-of-the-ship's-pilot view.) Drop-dead gorgeous full-motion video clips provide transitions between the different views.

The viewpoints in Philosoma might be unique, but the gameplay is standard shooter stuff. You start the game with three ships, each one able to take three hits before exploding and you can con-



tinue the game three times. Your ship is armed with four different weapons, each one useful against certain types of enemies. The Vulcan is a rapid-firing machine-gun; the Laser cuts through waves of enemies; the A-Break can be charged up to unleash a huge bolt of energy; and the Ray-B fires behind the ship, to hit trailing enemies. You also have a limited supply of "Shot Buster" grenades that destroy everyone on the screen. If any of this is new to you, then you've probably played video games for a grand total of six hours, over the course of your lifetime.

The graphics in Philosoma are a mixed bag. The full-motion video is astounding—and I'm getting as tired of



X-RATED



writing that in every PS game review as you are of reading it—but the in-game graphics are “plainer” than a garden salad. One of the game backgrounds even gave me horrific flashbacks of the worst shooter in modern times, the “64-bit” Atari Jaguar cart “Trevor McFur in Crescent Galaxy”. The sound effects and music are strictly average, and I quickly found myself turning down the game and instead playing to the soothing sounds of Alanis Morissette.

Philosoma’s most unfortunate flaw is that it’s too easy and short for even the average game player. The three difficulty levels somewhat fix the first problem, but there’s no

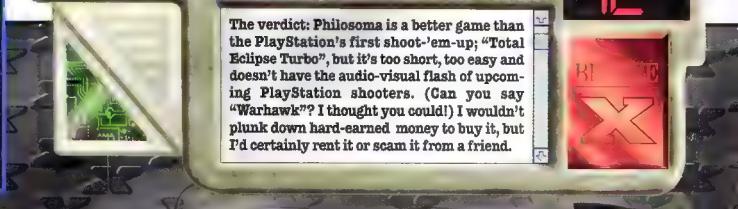


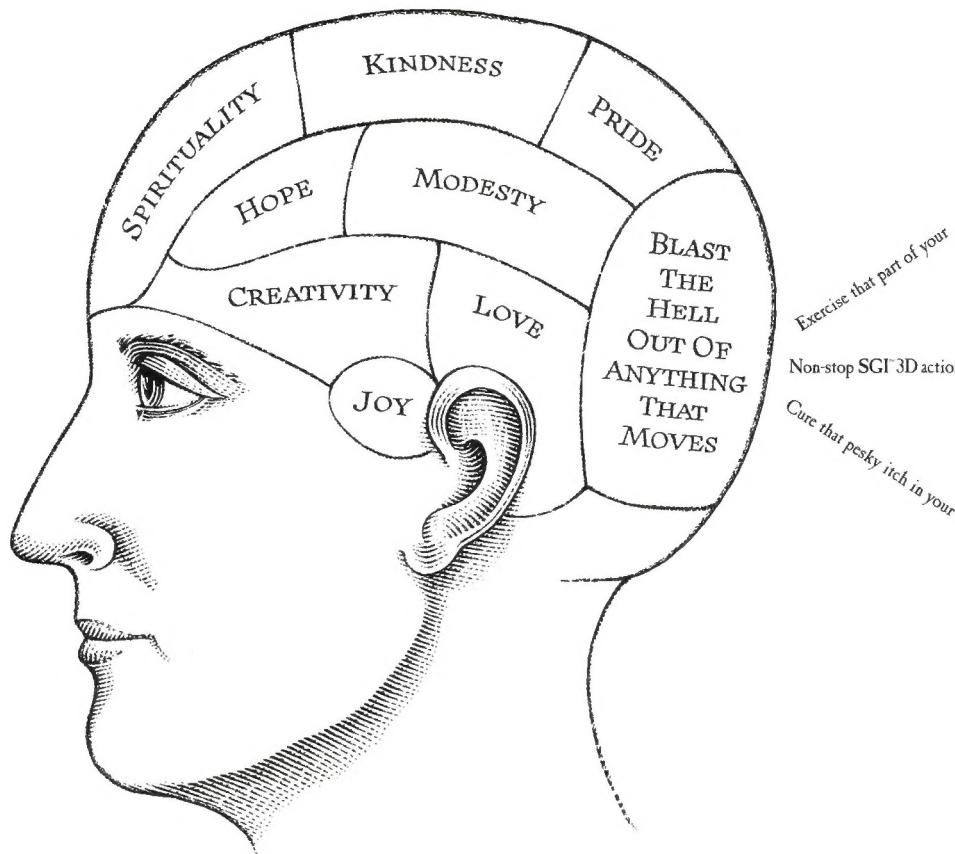
The Bottom Line...

The verdict: Philosoma is a better game than the PlayStation’s first shoot-em-up, “Total Eclipse Turbo”, but it’s too short, too easy and doesn’t have the audio-visual flash of upcoming PlayStation shooters. (Can you say “Warhawk”? I thought you could!) I wouldn’t plunk down hard-earned money to buy it, but I’d certainly rent it or scam it from a friend.



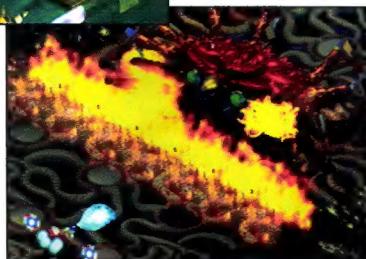
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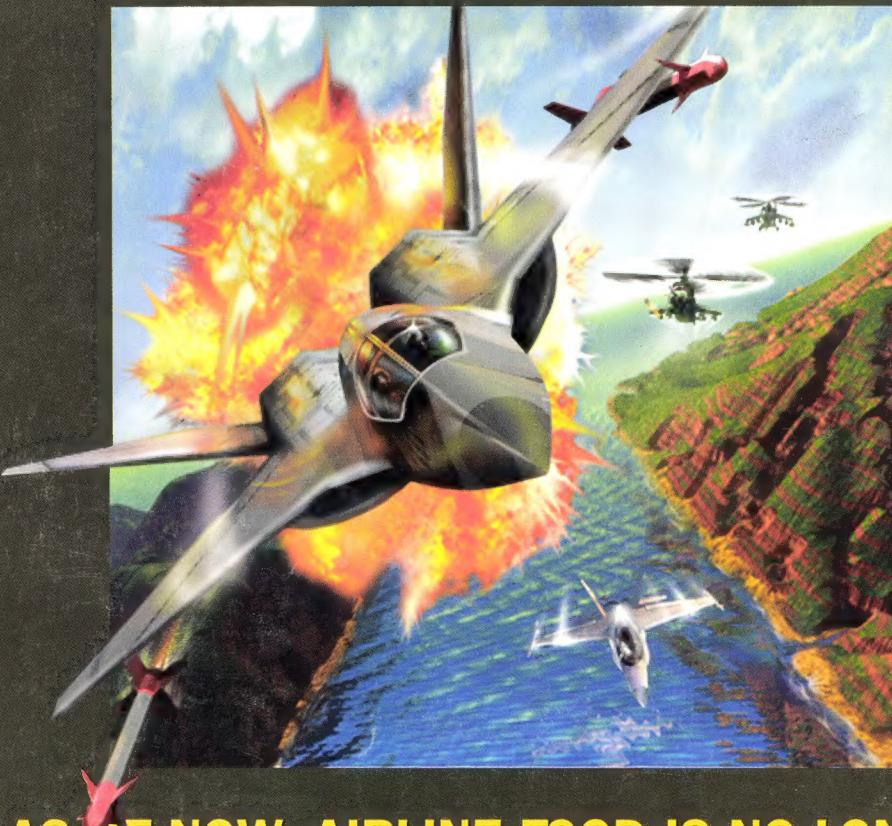


VIEWPOINT



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